

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01 AID-20

PC-04 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 EUR-25 NIC-01

RSR-01 /137 W

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R 231740 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3933

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 4717

THE FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO BOMBAY CALCUTTA FROM
MADRAS DTD APR 20 IS RPTD FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRAS 391

E. E. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, IN; PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: SWATANTRA PARTY CONVENTION, MADRAS 1973

1. SUMMARY. UNDER A HUGE CARDBOARD FIGURE OF
THE LATE C. RAJAGOPALACHARA (RAJAJI), CONVENING FOR
THE FIRST TIME IN THE ABSENCE OF ITS FOUNDER AND SINCE
ITS BHUBANESWAR CONVENTION IN LATE 1968, THE SWATANTRA
(FREEDOM) PARTY HELD ITS SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION IN
MADRAS APRIL 14-15. THE SESSIONS, ATTENDED BY ABOUT
ONE THOUSAND DELEGATES AND INVITEES, WERE MARKED BY
DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN PARTY CHAIRMAN PILOO MODY,
WHO PRESIDED, AND FORMER CHAIRMAN M. R. MASANI OVER
ELECTION TACTICS; BY A SENSE OF LACK OF DIRECTION AFTER
RAJAJI' S DEATH; BY EFFORTS TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF A
PEOPLE' S PARTY, DESPITE THE HIGH- PROFILE PRESENCE OF
MAJOR INDUSTRIALISTS; BY HARSH ATTACKS ON TAMIL NADU' S
RULING DRAVIDA MUNNETRA KAZHAGAM (DMK), DESPITE APPARENT
COMMON TACTICAL POLITICAL INTERESTS, AND BY STRONG CRITICISM OF

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INDIA'S QUOTE SATELLITISM UNQUOTE VIS- A- VIS THE USSR. SWATANTRA
MEMBER SHIP HAS DECLINED; ITS FUTURE SEEMS BLEAK.
END SUMMARY.

2. MASANI'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS WAS FUNDAMENTALLY A CRY
OF DISTRESS AT THREATS TO INDIAN FREEDOMS FROM THE CONGRESS
GOI AND ITS QUOTE OVER- COMMITMENT TO THE SOVIET
DICTATORSHIP UNQUOTE. HE CHRONICLED THE PARTY'S DISMAL
ELECTORAL RECORD AND URGED THAT IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS,
SPECIFICALLY IN ORISSA, IT PRESERVE ITS PRINCIPLES AND
NOT RPT. NOT SEEK OFFICE THROUGH OPPORTUNISTIC ALLIANCE
(I. E. WITH BIJU PATNAIK). HE NOTED THE SUCCESS OF OTHER
ASIAN COUNTRIES-- THEY TURNED OUT TO BE EAST ASIAN-- IN INCREASING
PRODUCTION THROUGH PRAGMATIC APPROACHES. AFTER QUOTING PROF.
SCALAPINO ON INDIA'S ALLIANCE WITH THE USSR VS. THE PRC,
HE CHARGED THAT THIS QUOTE SATELLITISM UNQUOTE DISTORTS
THE ENTIRE PATTERN OF INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE AND TIES ITS ECONOMY
TO THE CHARIOT WHEELS OF SOVIET IMPERIALISM. DEPARTING
FROM HIS PREPARED TEXT, MASANI PARAPHRASED LENIN BY
CALLING MRS. GANDHI'S SUPPORTERS QUOTE THE USEFUL IDIOTS
OF THE EAST UNQUOTE, WORKING UNCONSCIOUSLY TO FURTHER
SOVIET GLOBAL PURPOSES/ HE COMPARED MRS. GANDHI TO
SUKARNO AND NKRUMAH, BUT HOPED HER DOWNFALL WOULD
BE CONSTITUTIONAL.

3. MODY'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS WAS A TUB- THUMPING
EXHORTATION TO ACHIEVE A LOK SABHA MAJORITY (SIC) IN 1976.
HE DEFENDED THE CONCEPT OF ALIGNMENTS OF CONVENIENCE IN
ORISSA AND ELSEWHERE TO DEFEAT THE CONGRESS. DEPARTING
FROM HIS PREPARED TEXT, HE DECLARED THE PRIME MINISTER MUST
QUOTE MEET HER WATERLOO ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA UNQUOTE
INT EH 1974 UTTAR PRADESH ELECTIONS. PICKING UP A CONVENTION
LEITMOTIF THAT WOULD REACH FULL VOLUME WITH THE SPEECH OF
ANDHRA SEPARATIST G. LATCHANNA, MODY SAID THE NOVEMBER-
FEBRUARY AGITATION FOR SEPARATE STATEHOOD WAS QUOTE THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL THINK I HAVE SEEN IN INDIA UNQUOTE. (NOTE: OF
THE 300 OR SO PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THAT BEAUTIFUL PERIOD, SOME
WERE BURNED ALIVE BY THE ANDHRA AGITATORS.) MODY TOO URGED
HIS PARTYMEN TO FOCUS ON INDIA'S SUBSERVIENCE TO THE SOVIET
UNION: QUOTE IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT AT ONE TIME MRS. GANDHI
AND HER PARTY'S RESURRECTION WERE ALMOST ENTIRELY FINANCED
BY THE SOVIETS... EVERY DECISION IN NEW DELHI IS MADE AT
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THE DIRECTION OF SOVIET AGENTS. UNQUOTE.

4. GENERAL SECRETARY MADHU MEHTA'S MOST TELLING POINT
WAS THAT THE SWATANTRA MEMBERSHIP DROPPED FROM 52,000
IN MID-1969 TO 34,000 IN MID- 1971. HE JPD NOT INDICATE
HOW MUCH ENROLLMENT HAD DROPPED SINCE.

5. ORISSA UNIT PRESIDENT R. N. SINGH DEO, IN AN APRIL 17 PRESS STATEMENT, LASHED OUT AT MASANI, ASSERTING THAT THE SWATANTRA IN ORISSA WOULD CONTINUE TO BE A CONSTITUENT OF THE PRAGATI PARTY. DEO HELD THAT MASANI'S RIGID, PURITANICAL ATTITUDE HAD LET TO THE LIQUIDATION OR NEAR LIQUIDATION OF THE PARTY IN GUJERAT, BIHAR, RAJASTHAN AND ELSEWHERE. (A SENIOR SWATANTRA LEADER ALLEGED TO US THAT MASANI HAD MANAGED TO ALIENATE EVERGBE ELSE OF NOTE IN THE PARTY.)

6. SEVERAL DELEGATES, NOTABLY J. M. LOBO PRABHU (MYSORE), CRITICIZED THE PARTY'S NEGATIVISTIC CONDEMNATION OF THE GENERIC IDEA OF SOCIALISM, WHICH ISM HAD COME TO BE ASSOCIATED THE WORLD OVER WITH THE COMMON MAN. RATHER, THE PARTY SHOULD CRITICIZE SPECIFICALLY CONGRESS SOCIALISM, WHICH IS BAD. HOWEVER, THE IJNVENTION SUPPORTED MODY'S VIEW THAT BY ACCEPTING SOCIALISM THE PARTY WOULD LOSE ITS WHOLE CASE.

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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7. IN RESOLUTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE PARTY'S GENERAL COUNCIL (WHICH MET APRIL 12/13), THE CONVENTION: EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S TAKE- OVER OF THE WHOLESALE FOODGRAIN TRADE AND THE SPATE OF NATIONALIZATIONS; FAVORED THE SEPARATION OF ANDHRA AND TELENGANA OR A REFERENDUM ON THIS QUESTION (LOBO PRABHU OPPEOSE); STRESSED THE NEED FOR CRASH ELECTRICITY GENERATION PROGRAMS AND WARNED THAT THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS WOULD REVOLT IF THE TAMIL NADU POWER CRISIS WERE NOT QUICK RESOLVED; DEMANDED FOR WORKING WOMEN EQUAL WAGES FOR EQUAL WORK; ADVOCATED CONTROL OF INTER- STATE RIVERS BY A GOI COMMISSION;

URGED THE SCRAPPING OF THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) ACT OF 1972, CHARGED THE GOVERNOR OF ORISSA WITH BUTCHERING DEMOCRACY, WARNED OF A WIDESPREAD UPRISING BY HANDLOOM AND POWERLOOM WEAVERS IF THE YARN SHORTAGE CONTINUED, AND CALLED FOR THE FORMATION OF PRO- SWATANTRA TRADE UNIONS.

8. IN RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED FROM THE FLOOR AND APPROVED, THE PARTY SOUGHT A GOI PROBE OF TAMIL NADU MINISTER FOR AGRI-CULTURE DHARMALINGAM' S REPORTED RECENT STATEMENT THAT THE DMK' S AIM IS QUOTE THE FORMATION OF A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT TAMIL NADU UNQUOTE (WE DOUBT HE SO STATED, AND ADVOCATED THE REDUCTION OF VOTING AGE TO EIGHTEEN.

9. ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE CONVENTION RESOLVED THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOI' S ALIGNMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION PROVIDESTO THE LATTER A STRANGLEHOLD ON INDIA' S ECONOMY AND TO THE COMMUNIST FIFTH COLUMN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUBJVERT THE GOVERNMENT, AND CALLAM UPON THE GOI TO PURSUE WITH VIGOR A DETENTE BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. MOVING THE RESOLUTION, MASANI CLAIMED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF KEEPING THE INDIAN OCEAN FREE OF FOREIGN NAVAL INFLUENCE HAD ALREADY BEEN DEFEATED: IN 1972 THE SOVIETS PUT EIGHT THOUSAND SHIP- DAYS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WHILE THE U. S. NAVY HAD ONLY TWO THOUSAND SHIP- DAYS THERE; SOVIET NAVAL VESSELS SPENT 300 DAYS IN INDIAN PORTS, TO 190 (SIC) DAYS BY USN SHIPS. SECONDING THE RESOLUTION, DAHYABHAI PATEL, M. P., MADE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA FOR THE RELEASE OF THE PAKISTANI PRISONERS OF WAR. HE MAINTAINED THEIR RETENTION WAS IN TUNE WITH NEITHER INDIAN NOR GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY.

10. A SURPRISE BUT NOTABLE VISITOR TO THE CONVENTION WAS CONGRESS (O) LEADER K. KAMARAJ WHOSE PARTY PROVIDES THE MAIN OPPOSITION TO THE DMK. HE ATTENDED AS A SPECIAL INVITEE, SAT ON THE DAIS ALONG WITH SWATAANTRA LEADERS FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS, AND HEARD SPEECHES OF MASANI DAMODY BEFORE HE LEFT AFTER GREETING THE LEADERS AND DELEGATES. KAMARAJ CAME ALONE AND HIS VISIT WAS MAINLY TO PAY HIS PERSONAL HOMAGE TO RAJAJI, TO WHOSE MEMORY THE CONVENTION WAS DEDICATED.11. COMMENTS:

A. PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH DELEGATES CONFIRMED THAT DISSENSION OVER THE PARTY' S FUTURE CONTINUES, BOTH IN TERMS OF PRINCIPLES (KEEPING THE ALLEGIANCE OF INDUSTRIALISTS AND LANDOWNERS VERSUS REACHING OUT FOR MIDDLE- INCOME FARMERS, URBAN SHOPKEEPERS AND SMALL BUSINESSMEN), AND OF TACTICS (FINDING ALLIANCES IN STATE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO SHARE POWER, VERSUS THE ISOLATED, EVEN STALE, PURITY SYMBOLIZED BY RAJAJI). ONE RELIABLE SOURCE NOTED THAT WITH THE DECLINE OF THE EX- PRINCE' S FINANCIAL RESOURCES, SWATANTRA HAD A MUCH HARDER ROW TO HOE IN ORISSA AND ELSEWHERE.

OTHERS CONFIRMED THAT AS INDUSTRIALISTS INCREASINGLY HAD TO
PURCHASE FAVORS FROM THE RULING CONGRESS (OR THE DMK HERE),
THEIR BANKROLLING OF THE SWATANTRA
SLACKENED. IT SEEMS THAT
THE CONVENTION NOT ONLY FAILED IN ITS ATTEMPT TO FORGE UNITY
AFTER RAJAJI' S PASSING, BUT MAY HAVE CLARIFIED MAJOR DIS-
AGREEMENTS AND THUS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR YET ANOTHER OF THE
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FUTILE SPLITS THAT AFFLICT INDIA' S NON- CONGRESS PARTIES OF
BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT.

B. PARTLY BECAUSE THE CONVENTION TOOK PLACE JUST BEFORE THE
AMBASSADOR' S FIRST VISIT TO MADRAS, WE DUCKED OPPORTUNITIES TO
SOCIALIZE WITH MESSRS. MODY AND MASANI. WE DID SEE LESSER
SWATANTRA LIGHTS, AND THE SENIOR POLITICAL OFFICER AND HIS INDIAN
ASSISTANT ATTENDED MOST OF THE PUBLIC PROCEEDINGS.

C. WE ARE POUCHING TO EMBASSY/ POL TEXTS OF KEY SPEECHES,
RESOLUTIONS AND LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS. MORE COPIES ARE
AVAILABLE IN THE EVENT THAT ANYONE IN WASHINGTON IS INTERESTED
IN MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE SMALL BAND(S) OF INTELLIGENT
PRAGMATIC INDIAN LIBERALS WHO COMPRISE THE WANING SWATANTRA.
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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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